

SUBURBIA:

The status of integration in suburban Chicago

Much has been said in recent years about the extent of participation of the black community in the benefits of middle class urban society. The continuing segregation of blacks within the nation's large cities, and their exclusion from the suburbs seems incontestable by the sheer weight of statistical evidence. For Chicago's metropolitan area, for example, 90 percent of the blacks are confined within the central city, about the same proportion as ten years ago. Within Chicago itself, 78 percent of the blacks live in neighborhoods that are 90 percent or better black, a higher proportion than ten years ago.

Yet, from the same set of statistics, people can draw apparently contradictory conclusions about the relatively narrow issue of black suburbanization in the 1960 decade. Witness the following examples for the Chicago area.

- "The proportion of Negroes in the suburbs jumped by one-fourth in the last ten years (from 2.9 to 3.6%)"
- "The proportion of Negroes in the suburbs crept up by a fraction of one percent point in ten years (from 2.9 to 3.6%)"
- "In the 1960's Negro population grew twice as fast as white population in the suburbs (66 versus 34%)"
- "If we exclude 15 industrial suburbs and satellites, Chicago's suburbs have fewer Negroes today than ten years ago (0.7 versus 0.9%)"
- "Negro population grew twice as fast in the suburbs as in Chicago in the 1960's (66 versus 36%)"
- "Ninety percent of the metropolitan area blacks live in Chicago, about the same proportion as in 1960"

No Change for Blacks

From time to time, readers of Chicago's Sunday supplements are regaled with success stories of open housing agencies helping a handful of black families buy a home in a posh suburb. But a close reading of 1960-70 census changes should disabuse anyone of the notion that racial barriers are being lifted in the suburbs. Eighty-three percent of Chicago's black suburban population of 128,300 lives in mostly segregated neighborhoods in 15 of the area's 237 suburban municipalities (see Table 1). The entire 10-year gain of 50,800 suburban blacks occurred in these 15 suburbs. Thus, over 99 percent of the 1.1 million blacks of metropolitan Chicago live in 16 of the area's 238 municipalities, and the 10-year gain of 280,000 blacks in the area was contained within these same 16 places.

The largest black suburban settlements are in Evanston, Harvey, and Maywood, each with over 10,000 blacks. We have plotted on a map the 1960 and 1970 distribution of Evanston blacks, and the 1970 distribution of Harvey and

Maywood blacks. The maps reveal a pattern of segregation and contiguous expansion very similar to that prevailing in Chicago's ghettos.

Looking at the 237 other suburbs, most of these showed lower black percentages in 1970, and 17, mostly posh, suburbs actually lost blacks as aged domestics died during the decade and were replaced by now more fashionable European and Latin-American servants. Thus the six North Shore communities represented on your Conference lost 300 blacks in the decade. (Table 2)

As a group, the 1,350 black residents of these six North Shore communities have the lowest income, the most menial occupations, and the most lopsided age and sex ratios in the metropolitan area. Their average income in 1970 was \$3,500; two-thirds of the workers held domestic service jobs; adults outnumbered children and women outnumbered men by identical ratios of 4 to 1.

There are also contradictory explanations of the causes and consequences of racial segregation. The conventional opinion is that economic discrimination, rather than racial prejudice, is the root cause of residential segregation. This view is perhaps best expressed by Edward C. Banfield in *The Unheavenly City*.

What if there were no discrimination?

One way to estimate the importance of racial prejudice is to ask, says Banfield, how matters would change if overnight housing and job discrimination on color grounds were to disappear. In his view, the great majority of blacks would "go on living in the same neighborhoods for the simple reason that they could not afford to move to better ones," they would continue working at the same jobs, and sending their children to the same schools.

Moreover, says Banfield, some Negroes would be hurt by the end of racial discrimination: "Most Negro professionals and politicians have an advantage in not having to compete with whites, and some who do compete with whites receive a premium for being black." "By putting them into competition with (whites), the end of racial discrimination would, in the short run at least, hurt perhaps as many (blacks) as it would help."

Banfield concludes that if a Negro lives in an all-black neighborhood, the reason is not racial prejudice as such, but his "low income, cultural characteristics that make him an undesirable neighbor, and his inclination to live among his own kind." Income, class, education, and place of origin, rather than racial prejudice, are the root causes of racial segregation according to Banfield.

These views of the causation of racial segregation are shared by the Real Estate Research Corporation (R.E.R.C.), the City of Chicago's major consultant on urban affairs.

In the most comprehensive report ever made for the city on demographic trends, entitled "Economic Analysis of Housing and Commercial Property Markets in the City of Chicago, 1960-1975," R.E.R.C. writes as follows:

"Massive" neighborhood population transition is the only practical way to accommodate rapid growth of large low income and lower middle income groups in the population. All other conceivable methods of providing housing for these fast-growing groups are simply not feasible. Members of these groups cannot move into new housing in the city or the suburbs because they cannot afford it. Random scattering of individual families in many neighborhoods, true, would eliminate "massive" neighborhood transition. However, it is impractical for the following reasons:

(1) Members wish to live together with other people like themselves; hence they would not voluntarily adopt a randomized residential location pattern.

(2) These families cannot afford housing accommodations in many middle income or higher income neighborhoods.

The only two other alternatives are equally impractical. "Leap-frogging" movements would give rise to neighborhood population transition in various enclaves in our outer portions of the city or the suburbs. Thus the location of transition would be shifted, but transition itself would not be eliminated. Finally, restriction of members of these groups to the areas they now occupy is totally unacceptable because this policy is both illegal and morally unacceptable because it is discriminatory.

Thus economic segregation, voluntary segregation and involuntary segregation based on racial discrimination are the three major explanations for the intense concentration of blacks in Chicago and other American cities. Economic segregation would presuppose that blacks in Chicago are a homogeneous group, e.g., that they are all poor and all depend on rapid transit facilities and that the communities they move into are homogeneous and economically compatible, e.g., that they have low-cost housing and rapid transportation.

The evidence, however, does not support these assertions. Indeed, blacks cover almost as wide a range of socioeconomic status as whites. The only homogeneous communities in Chicago are high income single-family housing areas occupied by whites. Communities occupied by blacks are very heterogeneous and have very little low-cost housing.

In 1970, the overwhelming majority of Negroes (90%) lived in the city, and the substantial majority of whites lived in the suburbs (61%). At the low end of the socioeconomic scale, Chicago remains home for 64 percent of the metropolitan area unemployed, 76 percent of the Spanish-speaking, 85 percent of the welfare recipients, and 90 percent of the blacks. At the other end of the social scale, Chicago contains but 29 percent of all metropolitan area families earning over \$25,000 a year, 29 percent of the college graduates, and 25 percent of the white public school children.

The seven most centralized racial and ethnic groups are non-white and Spanish-speaking. European ethnics make up the least centralized groups.

Though income does influence the tendency to live in Chicago for white families, it makes practically no difference for blacks. Although this income group ought to be able to afford housing in any part of the metropolitan area, 86 percent of black families earning over \$50,000 a year live in Chicago. In contrast, families earning under \$3,000 a year might be considered hard put to locate in the suburbs. Yet 42 percent of white families in this income category live in the suburbs.

Other racial groups exhibit the same tendency to centralize despite higher than average socioeconomic status. Among the races, the Japanese have the highest average family income (\$13,500 versus \$12,600 for whites), the Chinese have the highest priced homes (\$31,400 versus \$25,200 for whites), and the Filipinos are the best educated (16.5 median school years versus 12.4 for whites). Yet 71 percent of Chicago area Japanese, 74 percent of the Chinese, and 80 percent of the Filipinos live in the city of Chicago, compared to 39 percent of Chicago area whites.

Of course, economic segregation helps shut blacks out of the suburbs. Blacks make up 25 percent of the renters and 6 percent of the home owners in metropolitan Chicago. The higher the housing cost, the lower the percent of black occupants. Thus blacks occupy but 5 percent of the apartments renting over \$200 a month and only one percent of the homes valued at \$35,000 or more.

This kind of economic segregation has been fostered in the suburbs by municipal zoning practices and other land development controls to hold down population density and to keep out middle and lower income families whose housing would not yield enough property tax base to pay for

TABLE 1: Black Population in 15 Interracial Suburbs in the Chicago SMSA: 1970 and 1980

	Total Population		Black Population		% Change 1980-70		% Population Black	
	1970	1980	1970	1980	Total Pop.	Black Pop.	1970	1980
COOK								
Chicago Heights	34,331	40,900	7,100	6,529	19.1	6.7	17.4	19
Dixmoor	4,735	3,076	3,071	1,855	53.9	65.9	64.9	60
E. Chicago Heights	5,000	3,270	4,655	2,794	52.9	73.8	97.1	85
Evandton	79,606	79,283	12,849	9,126	0.7	43.7	16.1	11
Harvey	34,636	29,071	10,711	1,986	19.1	437.7	30.9	6
Markham	15,967	11,704	7,981	2,505	36.6	219.2	49.9	21
Maywood	30,036	27,330	12,416	5,229	6.5	137.1	41.3	19
Phoenix	3,596	4,203	3,151	2,744	14.4	15.0	87.6	65
Robbins	9,641	7,511	9,436	7,410	26.4	27.4	97.9	96
KANE								
Aurora	74,162	63,715	4,667	2,227	16.4	116.5	6.6	3
Elgin	55,691	49,447	2,671	1,595	12.6	67.4	4.6	3
LAKE								
North Chicago	47,275	22,936	7,836	4,577	106.1	71.2	16.6	22
Waukegan	65,269	55,719	6,421	4,465	17.1	87.7	12.9	7
Zion	17,266	11,941	2,345	564	44.6	315.6	13.6	4
WILL								
Joliet	60,376	66,760	9,507	4,638	16.2	105.0	11.8	6
Total:	557,833	476,888	107,217	58,284	17.0	84.1	19.2	12

TABLE 2: Black Population in Six North Shore Communities: 1970 and 1980

	Total Population		Black Population		% Change 1980-70		% Population Black	
	1970	1980	1970	1980	Total Pop.	Black Pop.	1970	1980
GLANCOA								
Glencoe	10,675	10,472	539	655	0.7	-17.9	5.1	6
Highland Park	32,263	25,532	574	504	26.4	13.9	1.6	2
Kensilworth	2,960	2,959	27	39	0.7	-30.6	0.9	1
Northfield	5,010	4,005	14	26	25.1	-50.0	0.3	0
Winnetka	32,134	26,266	61	156	13.7	-46.1	0.3	0
Winnetka	13,996	13,366	117	252	5.7	-53.6	0.6	1
6 Suburbs	87,080	84,304	1,352	1,831	15.1	-17.1	1.4	1

local services. Economic segregation has also been fostered by subdivision builders who produce large housing developments in the same price range because of the house buyer's preference for homogeneous class neighborhoods.

The latest open housing or so-called fair-share plan for the Chicago metropolitan area announced October 1, 1973 is to be commended for its intentions, but faulted for its very limited goals and cautious language. The plan boldly documents the need for 229,400 additional low and moderate income housing units but meekly settles for 10,000 such units. It bravely calls attention to the dire need for more job-linked housing created by 500,000 new suburban jobs in the last 10 years, but assigns first priority to "the housing needs of people already living in each community, especially the elderly." It is presumed that most of the 10,000 units will be allocated to the 63,000 low income elderly households in the suburbs.

The Fair Share Plan

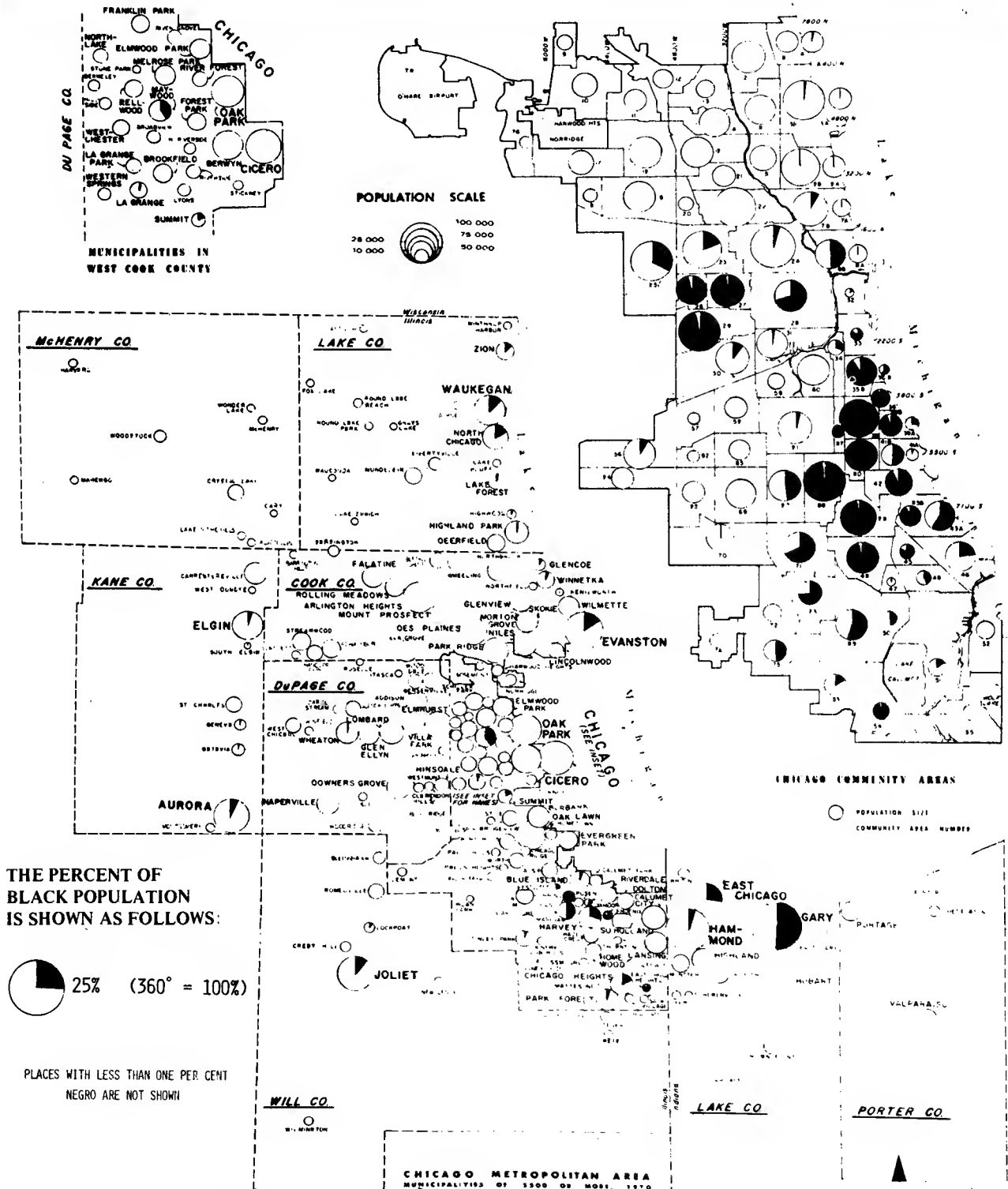
Nevertheless, the Regional Housing Coalition's fair share plan is the most practical and politically feasible strategy so far proposed for metropolitan Chicago.

The very language of the plan, especially the change in language between first and final draft, are instructive about political sensitivities since a steering committee of 13 suburban mayors and village presidents helped mold the final document. "Fair share" was struck out in favor of "Interim" Plan, the "Metropolitan" became the "Regional" Housing Coalition, and "Metropolitan Chicago" became North-eastern Illinois.

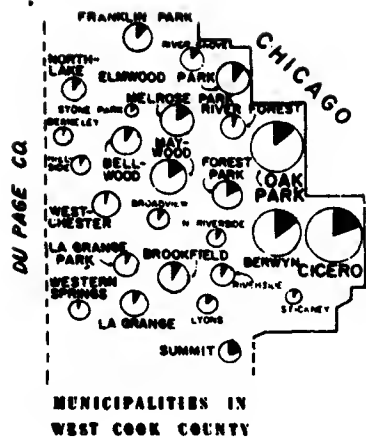
Although blacks are the major victims of the shortage of job-linked housing addressed by the Plan, the words "blacks" and "Negroes" do not appear anywhere in the 34-page document. The housing needs of Chicago's million blacks are expressed in oblique phrases like — "a great need for more and better housing exists for people who now live within the City of Chicago and will continue to live there." People who live and work in Chicago are not listed among the groups in need of the new suburban housing, even though it could easily be demonstrated that tens of thousands of Chicago blacks are shut out of suburban jobs by being shut out of suburban housing.

Table 4: Black Population in Chicago and the Suburban Ring: 1970 and 1960

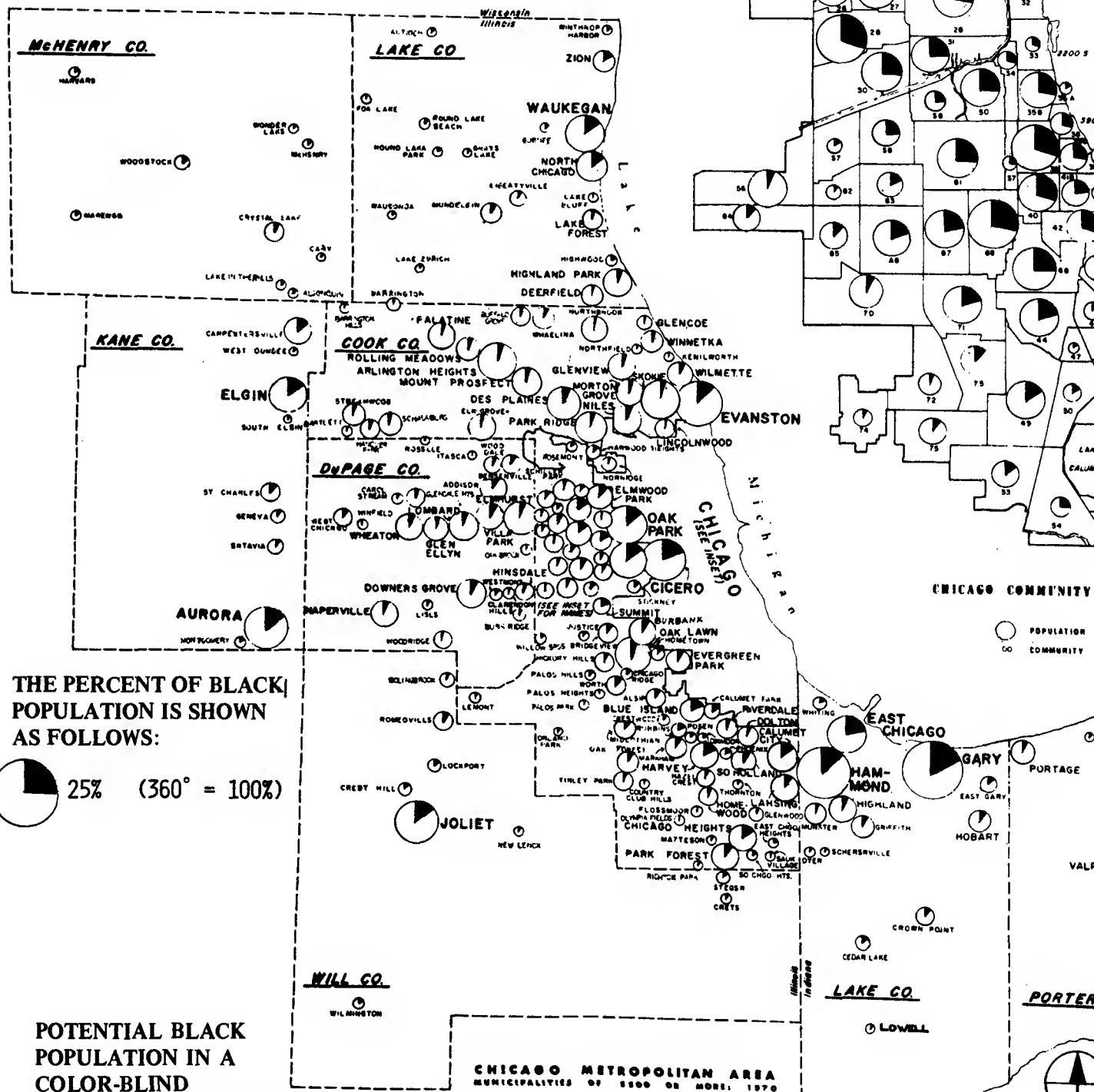
	Total Population		Black Population		% Change 1960-70		% Population Black	
	1970	1960	1970	1960	Total Pop.	Black Pop.	1970	1960
Chicago	3,369,359	3,550,404	1,102,620	812,637	-5.2	35.7	32.7	22.9
Suburban Ring	3,608,379	2,670,509	128,299	77,517	35.1	65.5	3.6	2.9
15 Suburbs)	557,833	476,888	107,217	58,264	17.0	84.1	19.2	12.2
Balance)	3,050,546	2,193,621	21,082	19,253	39.1	9.5	0.7	0.9
Total SMSA	6,977,933	6,220,913	1,230,919	890,154	12.2	38.3	17.6	14.3



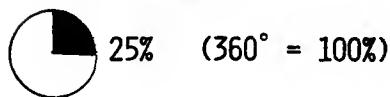
PERCENT OF BLACK POPULATION, 1970, BY MUNICIPALITY, AND BY COMMUNITY AREA IN CITY OF CHICAGO



POPULATION SCALE



THE PERCENT OF BLACK
POPULATION IS SHOWN
AS FOLLOWS:



POTENTIAL BLACK
POPULATION IN A
COLOR-BLIND
HOUSING MARKET, BY MUNICIPALITY, AND BY
COMMUNITY AREA IN CITY OF CHICAGO, 1970

It may be fairly assumed from these changes and omissions in language that suburban politicians regard words like "fair share," "metropolitan," "Chicago," "blacks," and "Negroes" as undesirable, at least from the point of view of the suburban municipal councils and their electorates. Yet, even with the mincing of inflammatory words like "fair" and "Chicago," with the emphasis on housing needs of local elderly residents, and with the modest goal of 10,000 housing units spread throughout the metropolitan area — strike that — the six-county region, this plan will have a tough time gaining the endorsement of municipal councils. Most councils may not even put the plan to a vote, and others may take the easy way out by submitting it to a referendum, and almost certain defeat, so strong is the suburban instinct to protect the socioeconomic status quo and the suburban opposition to economic integration.

The Mood in Glencoe

We need look no further than Glencoe — a community with a liberal reputation in the heart of your North Shore Conference — to gauge the intensity of suburban opposition to economic integration. In July 1973, Glencoe's village government, faced with a request for a zoning change to permit the construction of 170 moderate income units to house the local elderly, surveyed the electorate through a mail questionnaire asking for views on a number of zoning changes designed to increase housing density. Of the 2,483 who answered, 87 percent were against expanding areas presently zoned for multiple housing, and 94 percent were opposed to increasing existing housing densities. Indeed, 60 percent were in favor of reducing present densities. On the specific issue of raising the present 2-story height limit to permit the proposed elderly housing project, 91 percent were opposed to five stories, 76 percent were opposed to four stories, and 70 percent were opposed to any change. Even to the question of facilitating subsidized rental housing within the present zoning laws, an overwhelming majority of 81 percent voted no. However, on the positive side, 3 percent of the respondents said they would be in favor of facilitating such housing within the present zoning laws if no more than a grand total of 75 units were involved.

Thus, not only is economic segregation a secondary factor in the exclusion of blacks from the suburbs, but white suburbs are also dead set on opposing any attempts to break down zoning restrictions and other legal protections against the incursion of lower income people, whether they be oldsters or young parents and their school children, whether they be black or white.

Is There "Voluntary Segregation?"

So much for economic segregation as a factor in explaining the intensive residential concentration of blacks. What about voluntary segregation? Can the natural inclination of members of a racial or ethnic group to live among their own kind explain the packing of blacks in Chicago's inner city ghettos? Voluntary segregation would presuppose that the desire of blacks to live together is so strong that it overcomes economic and all other factors that argue against a ghetto concentration unknown to and unwanted by any other ethnic group. As a practical example, it would mean that blacks believe so fiercely in black separatism that they voluntarily put up with slum housing, bad schools, fleeing industry, high crime rates, and all the other features of black ghettos.

The relegation of a million of our citizens to black "reservations" in Chicago results in the rapid exodus of teachers, doctors, stores, and industries from these communities. A few years after a community has become all black, all residents that can possibly do so move out. Hard core vacancies settle down in what were previously sound hotels,

stores, hospitals, and industrial plants. The vacant structures and the political vacuum resulting from this exodus are rapidly filled by street gangs and street gang law. Most of the other dwellings and structures become occupied by tenants who must over use or misuse the space because of insufficient income. Sheer physical survival becomes the major priority for residents in the worst of the new slums — staying alive, unbeaten, unrobbed, unsick. Living conditions offered by public assistance programs and institutions — public housing, Cook County Hospital, and Cook County Jail — have to be made unbearable to prevent thousands of people from deliberately losing their jobs, becoming sick, or getting jailed to escape their living hells and gain the relative safety and comfort of public institutions.

Rapes and murders are so infrequent in white communities that these events make the headlines. These are daily and weekly routines in the black community.

In even the best ghettos — where the city's leading blacks in politics, business, sports, and entertainment must live — survival is a problem. Gang intimidation of school children is an ever-present danger. Only the incidence of crime is somewhat less in these more fortunate communities. Murders are monthly rather than weekly occurrences.

Forcing people to live in communities they cannot afford, to overcrowd the housing and the schools, and to misuse the commercial facilities is a major factor in the breakdown of community life and the take-over by street gangs. The collapse of public and voluntary services and institutions in racially changing communities is another factor. All the footloose professional and industrial people make their escape soon after a community starts becoming black. The teachers and the doctors are in the vanguard of white professionals fleeing the community after it receives its first blacks. Institutions that must stay like police and the schools simply maintain a presence but become ineffective or oppressive. The police are regarded as a military occupation force that is at once too repressive and too permissive, and the schools are considered as jails, although perhaps more dangerous and stupefying. Education and socializing are the functions of public schools in a white community. Commitment to a public school in a black community condemns the inmate to a yearly loss of one point in his I.Q. and a lifetime membership in a street gang.

Yet, Chicago's incredibly concentrated black ghettoization is defended by many people including city officials and their consultants on housing policy as the "only practical way to accommodate rapid growth of large-low income and lower middle income groups in the population" on counts of both economic and voluntary segregation.

Blacks Do Not Like Ghettos

The proposition that blacks live in segregated areas because of inability to afford better housing is an insult to the intelligence and an affront to the sense of justice of blacks who are forced to pay as much as or more than whites for housing that is generally unsuited to their needs. Blacks are shut out of communities with many better housing and job opportunities and relegated to communities that whites are willing to give up, at least until the bulldozer comes around.

The proposition that blacks prefer to live in crime-ridden ghettos and slum school districts flies in the face of attitude survey after survey showing that blacks prefer to live in integrated communities and are more concerned than whites about street crime and quality of schools. Voluntary segregation is also given the lie by the continuing exodus of blacks from the hard core ghetto to adjoining middle-class communities being vacated by whites.

On strict economic grounds, hundreds of thousands of blacks could move closer to the more plentiful jobs and

better schools in the suburbs. They are prevented from doing so by the knowledge that they are unwelcome in the suburbs.

Strategies that aim at opening up the suburbs to black residents must confront the reality that it is racial prejudice that is the main obstacle. Also any open housing plan that goes by the name of "fair share" must establish more realistically the suburban housing needs of blacks. To understand these needs one must first separate racial from economic segregation in the exclusion of blacks from suburban housing.

Measuring Racial and Economic Segregation

In 1970, 345,000 (15%) of the six-counties 2,183,600 households were black. Four-fifths of the black households were renters and one-fifth owned their own homes. One-fourth of the area's rental units and 6 percent of the owned housing were occupied by blacks. In the examples cited earlier of Arlington Heights and DuPage County, we noted that those proportions vary widely by cost of housing. In Table 3, we see that about a third of the medium priced apartments (from \$60 to \$150) are rented by blacks. But they rent only 5 percent of the housing above \$200 in rent. Blacks own about 11 percent of the housing priced below \$20,000, but only 5 percent of units from \$20,000 to \$35,000 and one percent of the homes priced above \$35,000.

Our method of determining how blacks would be redistributed throughout the metropolitan area in a color-blind housing market is to apply the proportions of black occupancy shown in Table 3 to the housing stock of each municipality and Chicago community area stratified by the same rent and price ranges.

This theoretical exercise should result in shifting about two-thirds of the actual black population from a dozen suburbs and 32 Chicago community areas whose actual percentage black is above the calculated proportions to the other 190 suburbs and 44 community areas. Two maps contrast their actual and potential black population. Presently the 277 communities are either all white or predominantly black, whereas in

a color-blind housing market no community would have less than one percent nor more than one-fourth black population.

Following are the ten suburbs whose housing keeps most blacks out on strictly economic grounds.

	% black potential		% black potential
1. Olympia Fields	1.3	6. Barrington Hills	2.5
2. Lincolnshire	1.6	7. Northbrook	2.8
3. Kenilworth	2.1	8. Glencoe	2.8
4. Lincolnwood	2.2	9. Oak Brook	2.9
5. Flossmoor	2.3	10. Northfield	3.1

Six of the ten most exclusive suburbs are on the North Shore, while eight of the ten suburbs potentially most accessible to blacks are south and southeast.

About 66 percent of blacks would be redistributed in a society free of discrimination. If we were to forget about standardizing housing expenditure and simply redistribute black population so that each of the 277 communities would have identical shares of 16 percent blacks, 90 percent of the area's blacks would have to be shifted. These two figures — the 90 percent and the 66 percent — are measures of racial versus economic segregation. In the range between 0 and 100 — no segregation and total segregation — segregation in Chicago area communities is at the 90th percentile. In these 90 percent points, racial discrimination accounts for 66 and economic segregation contributes 24. Thus about three-fourths of racial segregation is due to racial prejudice and one-fourth to income.

Only 230 Years

Even if the Regional Housing Coalition's Fair Share Plan were to be approved by the suburbs, developers found and the FHA 235 and 236 programs reinstated, blacks might receive one-tenth or 1,000 of the 10,000 housing units planned for 1974. If this one-year plan were to become ongoing, and 1,000 units were to be built yearly, it would take about 230 years to make up the deficit of 230,000 black housing units revealed by the color-blind housing market redistribution.

Open housing strategies directed at increasing the supply of suburban housing for blacks by way of federally subsidized programs like Titles 235 and 236 not only tend to exaggerate the factor of economic segregation but also tend to look at new construction as a better source of minority housing than existing housing. Yet in any year there are 3 to 10 existing houses and apartments available for occupancy for every single housing unit of new construction. Thus in 1970 there was a turnover of 387,000 housing units of which 350,000 were existing units and merely 37,000 newly constructed units.

Instead of relying on new construction of federally subsidized housing, the planners should rely on the yearly turnover of 350,000 units in the existing housing market. Instead of trying to break the firm resistance of suburbs to economic integration, blacks should be permitted to enjoy the freedom of whites to locate in exclusive communities. If economically homogeneous and exclusive communities are indispensable for white suburbanites, they should be indispensable for blacks, too.

TABLE 3. Cost of Housing For Black Households in the Chicago SMSA: 1970

	All Households	Black Households	% Black
Gross Rent			
less than \$40	4,194	689	16.4
40 - 59	28,693	7,416	25.8
60 - 79	74,483	23,101	31.0
80 - 99	134,697	39,502	29.3
100 - 149	426,862	131,487	30.8
150 - 199	224,292	42,414	18.9
200 or more	100,076	4,976	5.0
Median	\$130	\$122	
total	1,019,485	251,714	24.7
Home Value			
less than \$5,000	2,864	416	14.5
\$5,000-10,000	21,634	2,340	10.8
\$10,000-15,000	77,358	8,666	11.2
\$15,000-20,000	183,271	20,430	11.1
\$20,000-35,000	449,365	20,808	4.6
\$35,000 or more	185,663	1,702	0.9
median	\$24,300	\$19,000	
total	920,155	54,362	5.9

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